United Nations A/72/710

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 January 2018
English
Original: Russian

Seventy-second session
Agenda item 72 (c)
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Letter dated 29 December 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement of the Presidium of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea to the General Assembly in connection with the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 72/190 on the situation of human rights in Crimea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 72 (c).

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

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Annex to the letter dated 29 December 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement to the General Assembly in connection with the adoption of the resolution on the situation of human rights in Crimea

In this statement, we will address the adoption by the General Assembly on 19 December 2017 of resolution 72/190 on the situation of human rights in Crimea, the draft of which was put forward by Ukraine.

We believe the adopted document to be inconsistent with the fundamental principles and provisions of the United Nations enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is the primary international instrument related to the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms, and also with other international human rights instruments. It is deplorable that the Crimean people must witness this process, not least because it was in Crimea that the decision to establish the United Nations was taken.

The Ukrainian action also disregards the right of peoples to self-determination, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, international covenants on human rights and the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This right was exercised by the multi-ethnic Crimean people in the historic referendum of 16 March 2014.

We consider that the events of spring 2014 clearly demonstrated that the Crimean people were prepared to stand up for the fundamental right of each person and citizen: the right to life. The alternative would have been civil war and bloodshed, which would have continued until the present, particularly because the leadership of the Ukrainian State still includes individuals who are concealing their pro-fascist and inhumane views behind the mask of democracy.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." But can we really say that the actions by Ukraine towards the Crimean people reflect this? We consider the water, food, transportation and energy blockade to be a form of terror against all inhabitants of the Crimean Peninsula.

It is also worth remembering that "concern" about the observance of human rights in the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol is being expressed by a State that has unleashed a bloody and fratricidal civil war in south-eastern Ukraine and has collectively labelled the people of the Donbas region — its own citizens, as Kiev asserts — terrorists and separatists. Moreover, baseless accusations of human rights violations are being made against Russia and the multi-ethnic Crimean people by a country which has incorporated into its ideology aggressive nationalism, glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism, the violation of the rights of ethnic minorities, the persecution of religious denominations which it finds objectionable, the repression of dissenting voices and a crackdown on the freedom of the media.

Such accusations are particularly out of place and cynical from a State which, throughout the entire period in which Crimea was part of Ukraine, made absolutely no effort to improve the human rights situation in our Peninsula. None of the many recommendations made by international human rights bodies to Kiev between 1991 and 2013 have been implemented.

Lastly, how can there be talk of "concern" for the Crimean people given that representatives of Ukraine repeatedly emphasized in their statements in one of the General Assembly committees in October and November that there is no such thing as a "Crimean people"? Should we really be surprised that, faced with this kind of attitude, over 90 per cent of this "non-existent" multi-ethnic Crimean people voted for the historic reunification with Russia?

Representatives of States Members of the United Nations,

Distinguished colleagues,

We repeat our proposal that a visit to Crimea should be arranged in order to provide an objective assessment of the human rights situation in our Republic. We are particularly looking forward to the visit of parliamentarians from countries that supported the General Assembly resolution initiated by Ukraine.

Presidium of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea
Simferopol, 25 December 2017